

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03

PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 OPR-02 /048 W

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2665

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 2911

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS CG

SUBJ: SHABA INVASION: MORE ON USG STATEMENTS

REF: A. KINSHASA 2844, B. STATE 70141

1. FONMIN NGUZA SUMMONED ME AGAIN TODAY AND ON PRESIDENT'S BEHALF PROTESTED STATE DEPT'S RECONFIRMATION MAR 29 OF FALL OF MUTSHATSHA. THIS WAS REPORTED IN CABLE FROM ZAIRIAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON, TEXT OF WHICH HE HAD ME READ. NGUZA SAID PRES HAD HOPED THAT AFTER YESTERDAY'S STRONG DEMARCH (REF A) DEPT MIGHT HAVE FOUND A WAY TO GET OFF THE SUBJECT.

2. WE THEN SPENT THE BETTER PART OF AN HOUR DISCUSSING VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM. I SAID I HAD CONVERVED PRESIDNET'S CONCERN CLEARLY TO WASHINGTON AND HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT DEPT WOULD DO WHAT IT COULD TO BE MORE SENSATIVE TO GOZ'S CONCERNS. AS FOR MUTSHATSHA, HOWEVER, DEPT SPOKESMAN OBVIOUSLY HAD TO REPLY IN MANNER CONSISTENT WITH FACTUAL SITUATION ALREADY CONVEYEDTO PRESS. THERE WAS MATTER OF CREDIBILITY WHICH, IF NOT HANDLED CORRECTLY, COULD CAUSE REAL PROBLEMS FOR BOTH OUR GOVTS. GIVEN PAUCITY OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES IN ZAIRE, IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT JOURNALISTS WOULD PRESS DEPT AS WELL AS OTHER SOURCES IN EFFORT TO LEARN WHAT IS GOING ON. SHABA WAS MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO US PUBLIC AND CONGRESS AND, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF FACT THAT US WAS BEING ASKED TO HELP, CONFIDENTIAL

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THEY HAD EVIDENT NEED FOR AT LEAST MINIMUM INFORMATION.

3. WHILE NGUZA ALSO COMPLAINED BOUT VOA'S REITERATING REPORTS OF MUTSHATSHA'S FALL AND THE GOZ'S DENIAL, HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD WHY MEDIA INCLUDING VOA SHOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO ADHERE TO THE SAME GUIDELINES AND OFFICIAL GOVT SPOKESMEN. AS FOR US JOURNALISTS IN TOWN, I MADE THE POINT THAT IF GOZ ITSELF COULD NOT

PROVIDE INFORMATION THEY WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO SEEK OUT THEIR OWN SOURCES WITH RISK THAT CREATES FOR INACCURATE AND INCOMPLETE STORIES. WHEN NGUZA ALLUDED TO NECESSITY WAR-TIME CONDITIONS SOMETIMES CREAT FOR EXCLUDING ALL FOREIGN PRESS FROM A COUNTRY, I OPINED THIS WOULD PROBABLY BE VERY BEST WAY TO ASSURE A NEGATIVE PRESS.

4. I CONCLUDED BY REITERATING MY CONFIDENCE THAT, WHILE THERE WOULD INEVITABLY BE FURTHER OCCASSIONS WHEN THE DEPT WOULD HAVE TO ADDRESS FACTUAL MATTERS RELATING TO THE INVASION, EVERY EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO KEEP ZAIRIAN CONCERNS IN MIND. THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE DEPT'S MAR 29 PRESS BRIEFING, RECEIVED AFTER MY MEETING WITH NGUZA, MAKES CLEAR MY CONFIDENCE IS WELL FOUNDED.
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